



News Release from Congressman

ROB SIMMONS

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SIMMONS STUMPS FOR MORE SUBS

WASHINGTON, D.C. -Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, today delivered a speech at a conference on Future Naval Plans & Requirements. His comments come one day before the House Projection Forces Subcommittee meets to markup its annual defense authorization bill. Simmons is Vice Chairman of the subcommittee, with responsibility for naval and shipbuilding matters. Selected quotes are below:

Simmons on Building Two Submarines Per Year...

"Our total submarine force is declining. We've developed the best submarine in the world, the Virginia Class, but we're only building one per year. That's not good enough; we need to put advanced procurement funding for long-lead items into this year's defense bills in order to start building two-per-year in 2009."

"If we don't go to two submarines per year now, we will find that in the out years we don't have the capability we need to meet the very real threat. The Navy's proposed shipbuilding plan takes us down to 40 subs, and that is totally and completely unacceptable. In 2025, China will have twice as many modern submarines as the United States if current trends persist. Is that a problem? You bet, and Congress needs to fix it."

"The Navy and the Pentagon have talked about two-per-year since 2002, and every year they have thought up an excuse to kick the date down the road. There are no good excuses this year. We will achieve a \$2 billion Virginia Class submarine only after Congress commits to building two-per-year, because volume efficiencies are a critical part of the equation."

Simmons on the Fiscal Year 2007 Defense Budget...

"The role of Congress in this year's budget cycle is not different than any other prior year. The Constitution explicitly says that the Congress shall provide and maintain a Navy. Members of Congress make a solemn pledge to examine, evaluate and if necessary criticize the Navy's shipbuilding proposal - not to be a rubber stamp for the Pentagon, as much as that might upset some."

Simmons on Submarine Requirements...

"The Navy can meet only about 62 percent of the Combatant Commander requests for submarine mission days."

"The Navy says we can afford to be outmatched two-to-one by China in submarines because our boats are more sophisticated. I say numbers matter. You can expect that a heavy weight boxer will beat a middle-weight on any given day; but that same heavy-weight is probably going to lose if he has to fight a middle-weight and two light-weights at once."

Simmons on the Submarine Industrial Base

“The industrial base is not to blame for the terrible shipbuilding situation we are in today. Some people in the Pentagon say the market alone should determine our shipbuilding capabilities. What other country would have such a lax attitude toward the shipyards, suppliers, builders and designers that collectively make the best warships in the world? Is forcing industry to layoff half of the workforce at the nation’s premier submarine builder, Electric Boat, a good thing for our country, or is this insanity?”

Simmons on the Cancellation of the Advanced SEAL Delivery System...

“The ASDS program needs to be resurrected as something different because the capability requirement is still there. We are trying to provide our Special Operations Forces with a good platform that does not put our SEALs or the mothership at risk. We ought to have a design competition as soon as possible to take advantage of some great ideas and technology that have come out in the twelve years since the program started.”

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